

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**1-3. (Cancelled)**

**4. (Currently amended)** A method for protecting the outer retinal layers decreasing or treating retinopathy resulting from damage and/or degeneration of the outer retinal layers, which comprises administering an effective amount of a full-length recombinant hepatocyte growth factor as an active ingredient to a patient in need thereof.

**5-6. (Cancelled)**

**7. (Previously presented)** The method according to claim 4, which comprises the step of parenterally administering hepatocyte growth factor.

**8-9. (Cancelled)**

**10. (Previously presented)** The method according to claim 4, which comprises the step of administering hepatocyte growth factor in a form of an eye drop, an eye ointment, or an injection.

**11-12. (Cancelled)**